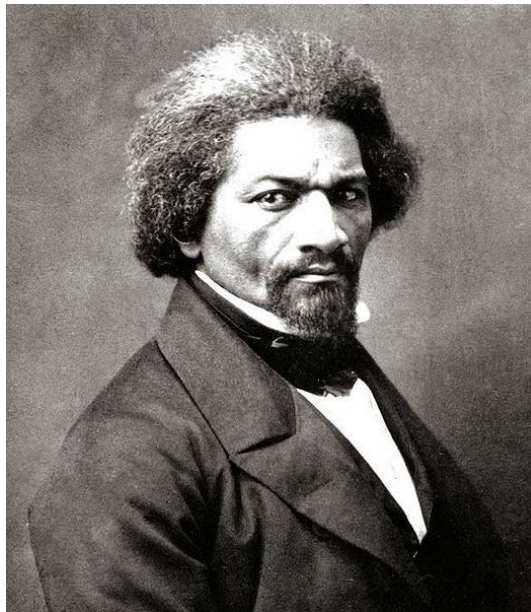


Famous African Americans Frederick Douglass



Frederick Douglass was one of the most famous African-American abolitionists. That means he worked to abolish slavery. He was the leading African-American speaker of the 1800s. He also met with President Abraham Lincoln in the White House during the Civil War.

Douglass was a former slave from Maryland. His freedom was not easily **obtained**.¹ As a child, his master's wife taught him how to read and write. After that, he knew he wanted to be free. He escaped to New Bedford, Massachusetts.

The first time he spoke was at the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. Douglass simply told the audience what freedom meant to him. Everyone was very impressed by his speech. So the society sent him **on the road**² to lecture about life as a slave.

¹ **obtained** – gained or acquired

² **on the road** – to travel from place to place

Douglass published his autobiography in 1845. After that he fled to England. He wanted to avoid being recognized as a runaway slave in the United States. Runaway slaves could be arrested. While in England, Douglass continued to speak against slavery. Through the help of his friends, he was able to buy his freedom.

Two years later, Douglass returned to the United States. He created an anti-slavery newspaper. He also aided the Underground Railroad. Eventually, he became an **unofficial**³ advisor to Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War.

³ **unofficial** – not officially appointed; not having the job title and not getting paid

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. According to the passage, how did Frederick Douglass get his freedom?
 - a. Lincoln gave him special freedom.
 - b. He moved to Massachusetts.
 - c. He moved to England.
 - d. He bought his freedom.

2. What information does the author provide about Douglass' life as a child?
 - a. Douglass lived in England as a child and wanted to go to America.
 - b. Douglass was a slave but he was taught to read and write.
 - c. Douglass grew up in the North during the Civil War.
 - d. Douglass was raised in Massachusetts but was forced to leave.

3. Which of these statements supports the idea that Douglass was an important figure in the Civil War?
 - a. He published an autobiography in 1845.
 - b. He served as an advisor to President Lincoln.
 - c. He lived in England for two years to avoid arrest.
 - d. He purchased his freedom with the help of friends.

4. Read the following sentences: "Everyone was very impressed by his speech. So the society sent him on the road to lecture about life as a slave."

The word **lecture** most nearly means

- a. to give a speech
 - b. to write an essay
 - c. to hold a protest
 - d. to learn a lesson

5. This passage is mainly about
 - a. how Frederick Douglass helped the Underground Railroad.
 - b. Frederick Douglass' life as an abolitionist.
 - c. how Frederick Douglass escaped from to Massachusetts.
 - d. advice that Frederick Douglass gave to Abraham Lincoln.

6. What did Frederick Douglass go on tour making speeches about?

7. Explain why it was important in Frederick Douglass' life that he was taught to read and write by his master's wife.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

Douglass wanted to avoid being recognized as a runaway slave in the United States _____ runaway slaves could be arrested.

- a. after
- b. so
- c. but
- d. because

9. Read the following sentence.

Douglass fled to England after he published his autobiography because he wanted to avoid being recognized as a runaway slave.

Answer the questions below based on the information provided in the sentence you just read. One of the questions has already been answered for you.

1. Who? Douglass
2. What did Douglass do? _____
3. To where? _____
4. When? _____
5. Why? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word:** impressed: admire or think highly of.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 560

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

Passage Summary: This passage describes the life of Frederick Douglass, an abolitionist in the 1800s. Douglass was a slave who was able to escape, and then wrote an autobiography about his experience. He spent his life speaking and writing against slavery.

1. According to the passage, how did Frederick Douglass get his freedom?
 - a. Lincoln gave him special freedom.
 - b. He moved to Massachusetts.
 - c. He moved to England.
 - d. **He bought his freedom.**
2. What information does the author provide about Douglass' life as a child?
 - a. Douglass lived in England as a child and wanted to go to America.
 - b. **Douglass was a slave but he was taught to read and write.**
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3. Which of these statements supports the idea that Douglass was an important figure in the Civil War?
 - a. He published an autobiography in 1845.
 - b. **He served as an advisor to President Lincoln.**
 - c. He lived in England for two years to avoid arrest.
 - d. He purchased his freedom with the help of friends.
4. Read the following sentences: "Everyone was very impressed by his speech. So the society sent him on the road to lecture about life as a slave."

The word **lecture** most nearly means

- a. **to give a speech**
- b. to write an essay
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5. This passage is mainly about

- a. how Frederick Douglass helped the Underground Railroad.
- b. Frederick Douglass' life as an abolitionist.**
- c. how Frederick Douglass escaped from to Massachusetts.
- d. advice that Frederick Douglass gave to Abraham Lincoln.

6. What did Frederick Douglass go on tour making speeches about?

Suggested answer: Douglass made speeches about slavery, what freedom meant to him, and his life as a slave.

7. Explain why it was important in Frederick Douglass' life that he was taught to read and write by his master's wife.

Suggested answer: Answers will vary. Most importantly, it would have helped him be able to write his autobiography and make impressive speeches. It also helped him be able to start a newspaper. Students may also say that it was important because not all slaves would have been taught to read and write by their masters.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

Douglass wanted to avoid being recognized as a runaway slave in the United States _____ runaway slaves could be arrested.

- a. after
- b. so
- c. but
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Douglass fled to England after he published his autobiography because he wanted to avoid being recognized as a runaway slave.

Answer the questions below based on the information provided in the sentence you just read. One of the questions has already been answered for you.

- 1. Who? Douglass
- 2. What did Douglass do? **fled**

3. To where? **to England**
 4. When? **after he published his autobiography**
 5. Why? **because he wanted to avoid being recognized as a runaway slave**
-
10. **Vocabulary Word:** impressed: if you are impressed by something, you admire it and think very highly of it.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.